

Washington, D.C. - Congresswoman Melissa Bean (IL-08) spoke on the House floor today in support of H.Res.40, a provision requiring regular hearings on waste and abuse in government and strengthening audit requirements. Bean was a cosponsor of the legislation and voted in favor of the bill. It passed unanimously 423-0.

H. Res. 40 requires that each House committee conduct:

- at least one hearing during each 120-day period on the topic of waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement in the agencies under the committee's jurisdiction.
- at least one additional hearing per year if an agency's auditors issue disclaimers in that agency's financial report.
- at least one additional hearing if a program under its jurisdiction is listed as "high risk" for waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement by the agency's Inspector General or the U.S. Comptroller General.

The text of the Congresswoman's remarks are below:

"I thank the gentleman for yielding.

"Mr. Speaker, I rise today as a proud co-sponsor of this legislation and encourage its adoption in the House Rules. I'd like to thank Mr. John Tanner for his leadership on this issue since we first introduced it in the 109th Congress.

"Mr. Speaker, I came to Washington from the private sector where accountability and performance measurements are naturally part of best practices. As a Member of Congress, I've long advocated for increased transparency and oversight of government spending and performance. As the people's representatives, we have a responsibility to hold federal government agencies accountable for the tax dollars they receive and the services they provide. Like my colleague from Wisconsin, I applaud the President-elect's appointment of a chief performance officer, so we have executive branch measurement of government results as well.

“Although the last Congress improved agency and program oversight, this resolution takes accountability to the next level. House Resolution 40 mandates committee hearings every four months when reports suspect agency level waste, fraud, or abuse of taxpayer dollars. Furthermore, whenever an agency or program fails its annual audit, additional hearings are required to ensure changes are enacted to prevent the continuation of ‘business as usual.’ Finally, Congress, working with the Government Accountability Office, will hold hearings to investigate those programs, departments, or entitlements deemed ‘high risk’ for abuse, such as the 2010 Census.

“Particularly in a time of economic uncertainty, Americans rightfully expect Congress to create higher standards and practices to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse. Unfortunately, for the last 12 years, the GAO has been unable to analyze the financial balance sheet of the U.S. government due to numerous agencies failing their audits. As we work to stabilize our financial markets and stimulate this economy, we must also attend to long-term fiscal restraint and responsibility.

“With this resolution, and resulting hearings, Congress will have the information necessary to make the tough choices needed to bring our fiscal house in order. These practices will ensure greater return on taxpayer outlays.

“Again, I thank Mr. Tanner for his leadership and encourage bipartisan support of this legislation. I yield back the balance of my time.”